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FEMA

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Recovery News

\$10.6 MILLION IN THE HANDS OF CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE VICTIMS

More than \$1.3 approved for state grants and more than \$42.5 million approved for SBA loans

PASADENA, Calif. — Five weeks after the California wildfires, more than \$10.6 million, for housing and other disaster-related needs, is in the hands of Californians who live in the disaster-designated counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura.

Individual assistance (for disaster victims) is available in the counties listed above as well as public assistance (for state, county and local governments) for emergency work such as debris removal and reimbursement for protective measures. President Bush amended the Oct. 24 declaration on Nov. 8 to allow the counties of Orange, San Bernardino and San Diego to apply for additional assistance for public work, such as road repair, public utilities, public buildings, and public parks.

- Disaster assistance summary:
 - \$7.5 million – Housing assistance grants for rental expenses, home repair or replacement.
 - \$3.1 million – Other needs assistance grants for losses and damage to personal property; vehicle repair or replacement; moving expenses; and other disaster-related costs.
 - \$42.5 million – Approved SBA low-interest loans.
 - \$1.3 million – Approved California State Supplemental Grants (for those who have received the maximum grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state of California.
- 18,166 Californians have registered for state and federal disaster assistance online at www.fema.gov or by phone at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585**. Phone lines are open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., daily. The deadline to apply for federal and state disaster assistance is Jan. 9, 2007.
- Those who have registered are reminded to call FEMA to report any changes in personal or insurance information. Wildfire victims also can update their information online at: www.fema.gov/assistance/process/update_assistance.shtm.
- 7,786 FEMA inspections have been completed in the disaster-designated counties.
- 13,791 people have visited assistance centers seeking disaster assistance and mitigation information in English and many other languages. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) representatives are onsite to assist with loan applications for homeowners, renters and business owners.
- 18,025 residents and 5,249 businesses have received disaster assistance information from FEMA's Community Relations teams.

- Crisis counseling for victims of the recent Southern California wildfires is available. Those who may be feeling overwhelmed as a result of the wildfires or need disaster-related counseling may call the hotline number for their county:

Los Angeles	(800) 854-7771
Orange	(866) 830-6011
Riverside	(800) 706-7500
San Bernardino	(888) 743-1478
San Diego	(800) 479-3339
Santa Barbara	(888) 868-1649
Ventura	(800) 671-0887

- People living or working in the seven disaster-designated counties whose jobs were affected by the California wildfires may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) from the California State Employment Development Department. **The deadline to apply is Jan. 9, 2008.**

The fastest and easiest option for individuals to file claims for DUA benefits is online at <http://www.edd.ca.gov/fleclaim.htm>.

Claimants can also file by telephone:

English.....	1-800-300-5616
Spanish.....	1-800-326-8937
Cantonese.....	1-800-547-3506
Mandarin.....	1-866-303-0706
Vietnamese.....	1-800-547-2058
TTY (non-voice).....	1-800-815-9387

- The California State Bar has a **legal assistance hotline at 1-866-636-9041**. Wildfire victims can call the line with disaster-related basic legal questions, such as those on replacing lost documents, housing-landlord-tenant disputes, and insurance issues.
- A local assistance center, to serve those affected by the Malibu fire, has opened in Malibu at the Malibu Bluffs Park, 24250 Pacific Coast Highway. Hours are from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday; and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday. The center will operate through Friday, December 7.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 1-800-462-7585.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.

Temporary housing assistance from FEMA does not require that an applicant file for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for additional assistance under the part of the Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses. There are other ONA grants such as public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses that do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan to be eligible. FEMA will process applications for housing assistance regardless of whether the applicant has applied for an SBA loan, and eligibility determinations for applicants requesting FEMA's temporary housing assistance will not be held up because the applicant has or has not filled out an SBA application.

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